

Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSE THE *SCHOOL CONNECT – SCHOOL BASED HEALTH TEAMS* CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL AND AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO WORK WITH THE CHILDREN'S TRUST AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A FINAL PROPOSAL FOR SCHOOL-BASED HEALTHCARE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL IN JANUARY

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to ensuring a healthy environment for all students and staff within the school community. The 2005-2008 District Strategic Plan has provided a framework for a high-functioning school district focused on increased student achievement. There is, however, a foundational requirement that children must be physically healthy in order to achieve academic excellence.

Currently, the majority of students do not have access to basic health screenings, which provide early indicators of individual healthcare needs. According to the Health Council of South Florida, Inc., more than 100,000 children in Miami-Dade County do not have basic health insurance. Lack of preventative health services leads to higher health costs and inappropriate use of emergency rooms. Also, poor health status and lack of care leads to higher absenteeism and poor educational performance.

The current school health services situation is fragmented and not consistent from school to school. Close to 90% of schools have no school-based health services. Limited staff makes it very difficult to connect children without a medical home to community health providers. Although M-DCPS has instituted a number of initiatives to improve children's health, we have not been able to institute a comprehensive solution.

Today, we have an unprecedented opportunity to address this issue. The Children's Trust, charged with improving the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County by making strategic investments in their futures, is launching a major health initiative. The Children's Trust has allocated \$20 million a year for the next three years to fund children's health initiatives, \$10 million of which is reserved for school-based healthcare.

Over the summer, District staff has worked closely with The Children's Trust and the Miami-Dade County Health Department to develop a model for school-based healthcare that addresses the physical and mental health needs of children. This collaboration seeks to pool resources, from multiple community stakeholders, to provide school-based health services and link children to medical homes. One of the desired outcomes of this collaboration is that every school in M-DCPS would provide a standard set of school health services for physical and mental health.

Following is the conceptual framework for *School Connect* that has been collaboratively designed, by M-DCPS, The Children's Trust, and Miami-Dade County Health Department to address the challenge of inadequate school-based healthcare.

School Connect – School-based Health Teams

School Connect Health Teams are health services teams that would consist of a school nurse, a school social worker and a health technician providing primary care at school sites.

Issue/Problem for M-DCPS	Proposed Solution	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of schools have no nurse or school-based healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Health Teams composed of a School Nurse, a School Social Worker (SSW), and a Health Technician (HT) that would provide primary care, conduct all mandated screenings, psycho-educational assessments, and mental health counseling as appropriate at school sites Current staffing model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurse for 2 schools SSW for 2 schools HT for every school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Health Teams ensure a coordinated level of healthcare is consistently available at every school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to primary health-care and link to medical home A system to identify and solve students' health and educational issues Mandated screenings and assessments with appropriate follow-up A system for dealing with crisis medical situations Appropriate administration of medications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 19 health technicians provide all mandated health screenings to over 200,000 students 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No standardization of outcomes or data to monitor the quality and level of services delivered 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge and training of school-site personnel on recognizing and dealing with possible health issues of students 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination between school-site personnel and health professionals is limited 		

The school nurse and school social worker would be part of a community provider system to assure linkage to community health services for follow-up care on a year-round and 24-hour basis.

Community Health Provider/Mental Health Provider

- Defined as a hospital, medical group, community clinic, private practice or other provider of year-round pediatric care with 24-hour coverage who would provide supervision as well as backup to the school nurse and SSW.
- Via this route, new student patients would be accepted when no other "medical home" is identified and when the funding mechanism for such services meets previously agreed criteria. Medicaid and private insurance billing would occur when allowable.
- The community mental health provider could be the same entity as the community health provider if the full spectrum of services were provided.

Cost

The present proposal for a health technician in all 331 schools, one school social worker for every two schools and one school nurse for every two schools is estimated to cost approximately \$40 million annually. Thus far, we can see these potential contributors:

- \$7 million from Miami-Dade County Public Schools. This is redirected funding, NOT additional funding.
- \$10 million a year for three years from The Children's Trust. Additional years funding is contingent upon renewal of The Children's Trust as an independent special district, to be voted on in 2008.
- \$3 million from the Miami-Dade County Health Department. This is redirected funding, NOT additional funding.

Next Steps

M-DCPS, the Miami-Dade County Health Department, and The Children's Trust have an established planning committee for School Connect. The planning committee is charged with developing:

- A governance body proposal
- Defining standards, protocols, and procedures to ensure that every child receives the same level and quality of healthcare services
- A more refined prototype for the school health teams
- A business and implementation plan, including fund-raising and program development strategies and activities
- A final proposal to be presented to M-DCPS, Miami-Dade County Health Department, and community partners for endorsement. Currently, implementation is targeted to begin in Fall 2006.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the School Connect conceptual proposal and authorize the Superintendent to work with The Children's Trust and Miami-Dade County Health Department to develop a final proposal for school-based healthcare to be submitted for approval in January.